

of the Senate Dirksen Building. The Committee will consider S. 326, "Patient's Bill of Rights Act." For further information, please call the committee, 202/224-5375.

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. CAMPBELL. Mr. President, I would like to announce that the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs will meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 17, 1999 at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing on S. 400, the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act Amendments of 1999. The hearing will be held in room 485 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

Those wishing additional information should contact the Committee on Indian Affairs at 202/224-2251.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, the Finance Committee requests unanimous consent to conduct a hearing on Monday, March 15, 1999 beginning at 10 a.m. in room 215 Dirksen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSION

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet for a hearing on "Medical Records Privacy" during the session of the Senate on Monday, March 15, 1999, at 9 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNITION OF TUNISIA NATIONAL DAY AND UNITED STATES-TUNISIA RELATIONS

• Mr. INOUE. Mr. President, I rise today to direct your attention to a milestone soon to be celebrated by one of America's oldest friends and allies. On March 20, 1999, Tunisia observes its National Day, the 43rd anniversary of freedom from foreign control.

Tunisians have many reasons to be proud of their progress during these last four decades. We as Americans should share that satisfaction, because we have important common values and a long history of strong, mutually beneficial relations.

In fact, when Tunisia was still governed by Pasha Bey of Tunis, as a unit of the Ottoman Empire, Tunisia became one of the first treaty partners of the newly independent United States. The two nations signed a "Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation" in 1797. The pact provided for "perpetual and constant peace" between the par-

ties. If all our treaties were as faithfully observed as this one, our foreign relations would be more serene.

Whether protecting Mediterranean shipping lanes against Barbary pirates, opposing the Nazi war machine in North Africa, or supporting Western interests during the Cold War, the U.S. could count on Tunisia. More than 30 years ago, Tunisia displayed great courage in urging other Arab nations to seek an equitable settlement with Israel. Tunisia later built on that pioneering stand by playing an important role as an honest broker at delicate points in the peace process.

You do not see many headlines or television footage about Tunisia. The reason is that news coverage of Africa and the Middle East is dominated by conflict, extremism, famine, and other calamities. Tunisia, by enviable contrast, is a quiet success. On a recent visit to Tunisia, Undersecretary of State, Stuart Eizenstat, called Tunisia a "model for developing countries." He was correct. During these last 43 years, Tunisia has built a stable, middle class society. Tunisia has adopted progressive social policies that feature tolerance for minorities, equal rights for women, universal education and a first-rate public health system, and avoided the pitfall of religious extremism that has tormented so many other developing nations.

Under President Ben Ali's leadership, Tunisia has undertaken political reforms toward political pluralism and become the first nation south of the Mediterranean to formally associate itself with the European Union.

These are only some of the accomplishments of this small, resilient, forward-looking nation. We should be mindful of this enviable record. We should also take satisfaction that, 43 years ago, the United States welcomed Tunisia's independence and provided both moral and financial support. If all our investments abroad paid such dividends, the world would be a more peaceful place.●

RAIL COMPETITION AND SERVICE IMPROVEMENT ACT

• Mr. BURNS. Mr. President, since the early 1980's, Montana has been faced with a very serious transportation problem regarding the transportation of our grain and coal out of our state at reasonable prices and in a reasonable period of time.

Montana is a classic case of what happens to rail customers when you eliminate competitive transportation alternatives. Our rail rates go through the roof and our rail customers end up subsidizing rail rates in regions where competition is present. In a nutshell, our rail customers pay more for less service. The rail customers in regions with competitive alternatives pay less and receive more service.

Now, we're seeing the same thing happen in other regions around the nation. Montana has been down this road and I encourage my colleagues to look at the problems we face in Montana as a pre-cursor to what will happen in their states.

The Surface Transportation Board (STB), based on their deliberations over the McCarty Farms vs. Burlington Northern case, has indicated to the producer that BNSF's rates are not excessive. I am concerned that after 17 years of adjudication using the STB's decision making process, that process is flawed.

In the West, we have only two Class I railroads and in Montana, we have only one Class I railroad. Under today's deregulated environment, we have come full circle back to limited competition. Because of this lack of competition, Montana's producers pick up the tab for those who have competition.

Montana's shippers pay some of the highest rates in the world while our neighbors pay a significantly lower cost for transportation. In Montana, we are truly dependent on the railroads to transport bulk commodities that could not be efficiently transported by any other means.

Agricultural shippers are the most vulnerable to predatory marketing by monopolistic practices of railroads. The farm producer unlike every other industry we know of in America, cannot pass the freight costs on to anyone else, they must simply eat it.

We do not need to re-regulate the railroads; rather we need to restore the balance between rail customers and the railroads that Congress intended to achieve originally in the Staggers Rail Act of 1980. I look forward to working with my colleagues to restore the competitive balance in the rail transportation industry and level the playing field for our nation's rail customers.●

RECOGNITION OF YVONNE GELLISE, RSM

• Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I rise to honor Yvonne Gellise, who was awarded the Mary Maurita Sengelaub, RSM, Award for Meritorious Service for 1997. This award is presented annually to a person "whose contributions to the healing ministry are in striking harmony with the works of Catherine McAuley, foundress and first Sister of Mercy."

Yvonne Gellise was born in Bay City, Michigan, the fifth and last child of Levy and Regina Gellise. An early experience with polio fostered her early determination that characterized her many efforts on behalf of the community. In 1995, Yvonne joined the Religious Sisters of Mercy and became Sister Yvonne Gellise. Since then, Sister Yvonne has served in several administrative positions in Mercy facilities in